

SENATE DOCKET, NO. 903 FILED ON: 1/13/2009

## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Karen E. Spilka

*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:*

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the passage of the accompanying bill:

## An Act regarding families and children engaged in services.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
Karen E. Spilka	Second Middlesex and Norfolk
Paul J. Donato	35th Middlesex
Richard T. Moore	Worcester and Norfolk
Anthony D. Galluccio	Middlesex, Suffolk and Essex
Susan C. Tucker	Second Essex and Middlesex
Tom Sannicandro	7th Middlesex
David P. Linsky	5th Middlesex
Benjamin Swan	11th Hampden
Ellen Story	3rd Hampshire
Joyce A. Spiliotis	12th Essex
Kay Khan	11th Middlesex
Cleon H. Turner	1st Barnstable
Mark C. Montigny	Second Bristol and Plymouth
Thomas A. Golden, Jr.	16th Middlesex

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION  
SEE SENATE, NO. S02570 OF 2007-2008.]

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

**In the Year Two Thousand and Nine**

**AN ACT REGARDING FAMILIES AND CHILDREN ENGAGED IN SERVICES.**

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

- 1 SECTION 1. The General Laws as appearing in the 2006 official edition are hereby amended by
- 2 adding after chapter 6A section 16G the following new section:
- 3 Section 16H. Community-based services for families and children
- 4 1. *Whereas* families in the Commonwealth whose children are truant, runaway and acting in a
- 5 fashion that interferes with their parent's ability to adequately care for and protect said children
- 6 are families in crisis; and
- 7 *Whereas* the issues facing said children and families are complex and the services which would
- 8 best assist such families are not always available from a single agency or department of the
- 9 Commonwealth and the collaboration among multiple public and private agencies and offices is
- 10 required to ensure that all children and families receive the services they need to succeed; and
- 11 *Whereas* the current efforts to help said children and families lack accountability and
- 12 consistency; and

13    *Whereas* services are not consistently available in all communities;

14    *Therefore*, it shall be the policy of the Commonwealth to develop a flexible, consistent, and

15    accountable system of community-based programs to assist said children and families.

16    2. It is the intent of the General Court to create an accountable, community-based system that

17    provides consistent services throughout the Commonwealth to address the needs of families and

18    children in crisis by providing them with an array of resources. The goal of said system is to

19    preserve and strengthen families while ensuring the healthy emotional, mental, and social

20    development of the child. These services shall focus on creating a stable environment and

21    strengthening the family as a whole while emphasizing parental responsibility.

22    Said community-based system shall provide the family and child with immediate responses for

23    the stabilization of the family, as well as to connect the family to additional services in the

24    community through referrals and advocacy. The services provided to the families and children

25    involved shall be provided on a continuum of increasing intensity with the goal of keeping the

26    child out of the juvenile justice and child protection systems. The system shall include a

27    mechanism for the collection and analysis of information which will enable the Commonwealth

28    to evaluate the effectiveness of services and to identify gaps in services. It is the intent of the

29    General Court to reserve judicial intervention for those children and families who require

30    services beyond said community-based services in order to achieve stabilization and resolution.

31    3. For the purpose of this Section the following words shall have the following meanings:

32    ‘Child requiring assistance’: a child between the ages of 6 and 18 who repeatedly runs away

33    from the home of his parents or legal guardian or repeatedly fails to obey the lawful and

34    reasonable commands of his parents or legal guardian, thereby interfering with said parent’s or

35 legal guardian's ability to adequately care for and protect said child or repeatedly fails to obey  
36 the lawful and reasonable regulations of his school or who is habitually truant;

37 "Community Service Agency": a community-based organization providing services under  
38 contract with the Commonwealth, whose function is to facilitate access to and ensure  
39 coordination of services for families with children with serious emotional disturbance who  
40 require or are already utilizing multiple services, or are involved with multiple child-serving  
41 systems including, but not limited to, the juvenile justice system, department of mental health,  
42 and special education, as agreed upon under the settlement dated August 29, 2006 entered into  
43 by the parties of Rosie D. et al v. Romney civil action No. 01-30199-MAP filed in the United  
44 States District Court.

45 'Family with children requiring assistance': the parents, guardians, siblings, and any other  
46 relatives or caretakers responsible for a child between the ages of 6 and 18 who need assistance  
47 from state, local, or private agencies, or providers of social, educational health, mental health, or  
48 behavioral health services in order to adequately care for and protect the child;

49 'Habitually truant': a child between the ages of 6 and 18 not otherwise excused from attendance  
50 in accordance with the lawful and reasonable regulations of his school who fails to attend school  
51 for more than 8 school days in a quarter;

52 'Secretary': the secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services.

53 4. (a) The secretary, in consultation with the Commissioner of the Department of Children and  
54 Families, the Commissioner of the Department of Youth Services and the Commissioner of the  
55 Department of Mental Health, shall establish a network of child and family service programs  
56 throughout the Commonwealth to provide community-based services to all children and families

57 who are at risk of contact with the juvenile justice system or the child protection system, families  
58 with children requiring assistance, and children who require assistance. The secretary shall enter  
59 into contracts with the Community Service Agencies (CSAs) who shall act as Community-Based  
60 Service Centers, to implement the program and provide services which are within their capacity.  
61 The Community-Based Service Centers shall be permitted, subject to approval by the Secretary,  
62 to subcontract with other local providers as needed to provide the full complement of services  
63 required under paragraph 8 of this section.

64 (b) The purpose of the community-based services program shall be to assist families so that  
65 children will be able to continue residing with their families in their home communities; assist  
66 families to enable children to continue as students in their community schools; strengthen the  
67 relationships between children and families; and provide coordinated, comprehensive,  
68 community-based services for children at risk of dropping out of school delinquency, or  
69 engaging in behaviors which impede the likelihood of their leading healthy, productive lives.

70 (c) The secretary shall:

71 (i) design models for delivery of community-based services by community-based  
72 organizations and collaborations of public and private organizations;  
73 (ii) pilot alternative systems to address the problem of children running away from their  
74 parents or legal guardians;  
75 (iii) develop standards necessary to achieve and maintain on a statewide basis  
76 comprehensive and integrated community-based services for children and families;  
77 (iv) monitor and provide technical assistance to providers of community-based services;  
78 (v) adopt a standard intake screening and assessment tool to evaluate all families and  
79 children seeking community-based services which identifies the family's strengths,

80 resources, and service needs such as mental health, behavioral health, or substance abuse  
81 treatment, basic family shelter, clothing and food needs, child care needs, health  
82 insurance status, legal issues, education placement, and child protection;  
83 (vi) create a data collection system for use by programs which maintains the privacy of  
84 clients served, assists programs and the executive office of health and human services in  
85 addressing the needs of the population to be served, collects information related to,  
86 among other things, the insurance status and benefit coverage of clients served, income  
87 documentation as needed to apply a sliding fee scale for payment or waiver of payment  
88 for services, and other information that may assist the program and the secretary in  
89 providing services, identifying service needs and gaps, and evaluating the effectiveness  
90 of community-based services.

91 5. (a) Subject to appropriation, the secretary shall make grants for the purpose of planning,  
92 establishing, operating, coordinating, and evaluating centers, which will provide community-  
93 based services. At least one grant shall be awarded for the operation of a community-based  
94 services program in each of the 29 Department of Children and Families service areas.  
95 Additionally, two grants shall be awarded for runaway treatment and prevention programs, one  
96 in an urban location and one in a rural location. Grants may award funding for up to five years  
97 subject to demonstration of effectiveness and the submission of annual reports to the secretary.  
98 (b) Preference in awarding the grants shall be given to the CSA for the service area wherever the  
99 experience and resources of the CSA will promote efficiency and increased access to services. In  
100 circumstances where, in the judgment of the secretary, the CSA is not the appropriate selection  
101 for the Community-Based Services Center, proposals may be submitted by a local school or  
102 other local public agency or private organization or medical or mental health care providers.

103 (c) The secretary shall issue requests for proposals for the provision of community-based  
104 services. Proposals must demonstrate expertise in assisting children and families who are at risk  
105 of contact with the juvenile justice system or the child protection system and program staffing  
106 which meets the credentialing and caseload criteria as defined by the secretary. Proposals shall  
107 also require that applicants submit:

108 (i) A plan for development, implementation and coordination of direct services as  
109 required under paragraph 8 of this section for families from public and private providers;  
110 (ii) A plan for the establishment of a local advisory board which, wherever possible, shall  
111 be a subcommittee of the Systems of Care Committee required of all CSAs to focus on  
112 the needs of families and children at risk of involvement in the juvenile justice system  
113 and the child protection system. The subcommittee shall include: representatives from  
114 school districts, police officers, juvenile probation officers, district attorneys, attorneys  
115 who represent children, mental health clinicians, behavioral health providers, parents and  
116 youth. The committee may also include local religious organizations, representatives of  
117 local businesses, higher education, social service agencies, public health agencies and  
118 other persons with experience in assisting youth and families in crisis. Membership shall  
119 be broadly representative of the racial ethnic and economic diversity of the community.  
120 The local advisory boards may, where necessary to facilitate work in communities, create  
121 similarly constituted work groups for each municipality in the service area;  
122 (iii) Periodic evaluation of the success in achieving program goals a process for making  
123 adaptations and improvements based on evaluation information.

124 6. (a) Community-based services shall be available to children between the ages of 6 and 18 who  
125 are habitually truant or children between the ages of 6 and 18 who run away from the home of  
126 their parents or legal guardian or refuse to obey the lawful rules of their parents or legal guardian  
127 or repeatedly fail to obey school rules and to families whose children engage in such behaviors.  
128 (b) Whenever the staff of the program offering community-based services determines that a  
129 family seeking or referred for services for a child has significant and complex medical needs  
130 which cannot be met by the program or where the child's behavior presents a significant risk of  
131 harm to the child himself, the family or the community, the child and family shall be referred to  
132 other services pursuant to paragraph 5 of this section.  
133 (c) Where a youth has been charged with a delinquency offense or is an adjudicated delinquent,  
134 eligibility for participation in community-based services shall be determined by the program  
135 administrator after a review of the facts surrounding the offense by a team consisting of: a  
136 community-based services caseworker, probation officer, family members and the counsel  
137 representing the child in the delinquency matter.  
138 (d) Where the child is in the custody of the department of children and families and residing in  
139 an out-of-home placement, eligibility for participation in community-based services shall be  
140 determined by the program administrator after a review of the facts surrounding the placement  
141 by a team consisting of the community-based services caseworker, the department of children  
142 and families caseworker, a responsible adult with whom the child has an ongoing connection,  
143 and any counsel representing the child in the matter of placement and custody.  
144 (e) Where a child or family is denied access to community-based services for reasons other than  
145 those described in this section, the program shall provide a written explanation of reasons for  
146 exclusion and the identification of other community-based services and resources available to

147 them.

148 (f) When a child or family is denied services pursuant to this section, the program shall contact  
149 the family in person or by telephone within two weeks after the denial decision to determine if  
150 the other appropriate services have been obtained and whether or not community-based services  
151 are now appropriate. The program shall provide to the family and child a notice in a form  
152 acceptable to the juvenile court stating that the family is not eligible for community-based  
153 services and listing the reasons for ineligibility.

154 7. (a) A child or family may seek assistance from a community-based services program directly  
155 and without referral.

156 (b) Pursuant to Section 39R and 39U of Chapter 119, families may be ordered to seek services  
157 from a Community-Based Service Center by a probation officer or judge.

158 (c) Employees of the departments of children and families or youth services may make referrals  
159 to Community-Based Service Centers as part of a case plan.

160 (d) Voluntary referrals to community based services may be made by any professional who is  
161 working with the family or child(ren).

162 (e) Except as provided herein, a school administrator shall refer a student to a community-based  
163 service center at the same time that the administrator notifies the student and his parent or legal  
164 guardian that the student will be expelled for failure to comply with the lawful and reasonable  
165 rules of the school. After providing the process that is due the student, including an expulsion  
166 hearing if requested, the school administrator shall consider the outcome of the community-  
167 based service center referral, if known, in deciding whether or not to expel the student. If the  
168 outcome of the referral is unknown, the school administrator may expel the student, provided

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169 however, the school administrator shall reconsider his decision when he receives the results of  
170 the referral.

171 The school district shall make available educational services that will lead to re-entry to a regular  
172 education program and/or a high school diploma to any student who is expelled.

173 Subsection (e) shall not apply to students with disabilities who are eligible for special education  
174 services under federal and state special education laws and regulations

175 8. Community-based services shall include, but are not limited to:

- 176 (i) program representatives available to respond to requests for service 24 hours a day, 7  
177 days a week;
- 178 (ii) initial response to referral or request for services by a family or child, which includes  
179 a meeting to determine the circumstances which resulted in the request or referral within  
180 six hours of contact;
- 181 (iii) a plan for stabilization of any crisis, which initiated the referral or request within a  
182 reasonable time;
- 183 (iv) assessment and screening of each person requesting services and, if possible, all  
184 family members residing in the household using the standard intake tool as established by  
185 the secretary pursuant to paragraph 4(c)(v) within seventy-two hours of the referral or  
186 request. The person conducting the assessment and screening must note the reasons why  
187 any family member was not screened within seventy-two hours of the initial request and  
188 must complete the screening process for all family members residing in the household  
189 within one week of the initial referral;
- 190 (v) assignment of a case manager to each family upon assessment;

**Deleted:** (e) School administrators must refer children or families to community-based services prior to expelling them for failure to comply with the lawful and reasonable rules of the school or for habitual truancy, and the outcome of the services shall be considered as part of any decision to expel for these violations. Provided that when a school administrator refers a child for habitually truant behavior, it must be shown that the school, child, and family have completed a department of education certified truancy program, if such a program is available at the school. Whenever a child or family seeks assistance for habitually truant behavior, the program staff shall assist the family in gaining access to the child's school's department of education certified truancy program.<sup>14</sup>

203 (vi) creation of a family service plan within ten working days from initial contact, which  
204 includes: strength-based assessment and statement of family needs presented; needs of  
205 the child; needs of the parents, legal guardian or legal custodian; measurable objectives  
206 that address the identified needs; services and treatment to be provided by the  
207 community-based services program or to which the family and child will be referred,  
208 which may include but are not limited to: community, medical, mental health and  
209 behavioral health services, assistance with obtaining special education evaluation and  
210 services and remedial education services, assistance with insurance coverage issues;  
211 recreational services; mediation and family group conferencing. For each service or  
212 treatment included, the plan shall contain a statement clearly identifying the type of  
213 services or treatment, frequency of services or treatment, location of responsible service  
214 providers or staff, and timeframes for achieving the plan objectives. The service plan  
215 shall be reviewed and agreed upon by the family before implementation;  
216 (vii) periodic review of the family service plan by the case manager and the family to  
217 determine whether it is being followed and if it is effective;  
218 (viii) intensive crisis counseling for both children and families;  
219 (ix) parent training in appropriate skill areas directly related to the needs of the family;  
220 (x) data collection in a format as required by the secretary for each referral or request,  
221 which protects the privacy of the individuals seeking services while providing a means to  
222 insure that information necessary to optimize the likelihood of successful outcome for  
223 each person seeking services and to permit the evaluation of the effectiveness of the  
224 program;  
225 (xi) compilation and dissemination to the general public of information about family

226 support resources and services available in the community;

227 (xii) crisis intervention residential placements for children for up to 72 hours;

228 (xiii) voluntary respite residential placement of the child for up to 21 days; and

229 (xiv) mediation or alternative dispute resolution.

230 (xv) The program shall make available to the public information that identifies a variety

231 of community-based educational, social, medical, mental health and behavioral health

232 services available to assist families and children.

233 9. (a) Participation in community-based services shall be pursuant to a voluntary agreement of

234 the parent or legal guardian and the child. Families or children may terminate their involvement

235 at any time.

236 (b) Services may be provided for 120 days. After the initial 120 day period families or children

237 and the community-based services program case manager may agree to extend services for up to

238 an additional 90 days.

239 (c) Covered services shall be billed to the insurance provider for the client.

240 (d) The program shall advise the parents or legal guardian that they may be responsible for co-

241 payments for covered services and for contributing to the cost of non-covered services for the

242 child or family. Allowable rates for services not covered by insurance, including the portion for

243 which parents will be held responsible, shall be set by the secretary and periodically adjusted as

244 needed to meet actual costs.

245 (e) In the absence of the consent of a parent or legal guardian, respite care may be provided to a

246 child pursuant to the provisions and subject to the limitations of chapter 119 section 23

247 paragraph 7.

248 10. (a) Each family shall have a case manager who shall be responsible for working with the  
249 family to develop a crisis stabilization plan where warranted and a family service plan;  
250 coordinating services; assisting the family to resolve administrative issues including issues with  
251 insurance coverage, interagency issues and other issues which serve as barriers to successful  
252 implementation of the service plan; facilitating communication between providers as authorized  
253 by the child or their parent or legal guardian; implementing resolution processes when necessary;  
254 and working with the case staffing team to create an after care plan.

255 (b) The composition of the case staffing team shall be based on the needs of the family and child  
256 and be chosen after consultation with the child and their parent or legal guardian. It shall include  
257 the case manager, the primary providers of services to the child and family, a representative from  
258 the child's school district. The case staffing team may also include other individuals with  
259 professional expertise in health care, mental health care, behavioral health care, substance abuse,  
260 social or educational services, or other persons recommended by the child, parent or legal  
261 guardian, or case manager.

262 (c) The service engagement team shall be comprised of the Director of the Community- Based  
263 Service Center or their designee, members of the local advisory board and other professionals  
264 who are charged with developing engagement strategies for the Center and, at the request of the  
265 child, parent or guardian, or the case manager, addressing barriers to the initial engagement of  
266 individual children and their families.

267 (d) The case manager shall, in consultation with the family, develop a family service plan which  
268 shall be provided to the child and their parent or legal guardian and other family members  
269 requiring assistance who are involved in the plan within ten days of the initial referral. Upon

270 receipt of the plan, the child and each family member named in the plan shall accept or reject the  
271 services and provisions in writing. Each service provider identified in the plan shall also accept  
272 or reject their participation in writing. If the plan is accepted, it shall be implemented  
273 immediately. If the child or family is not in agreement with the plan and attempts by the case  
274 manager to develop an alternative plan are unsuccessful or when the services required are not  
275 available, the child, their parent or guardian or the case manager may request review by the  
276 service engagement team who shall assist the case manager, child and family in developing an  
277 alternative plan.

278 (e) The case manager and the family shall be equally responsible for implementing the plan. The  
279 case manager, the family and child shall periodically review the progress towards achieving the  
280 objectives of the plan in order to:

281 (i) advise the case staffing team of the need to make adjustments to the plan; or  
282 (ii) terminate the case as indicated by successful or substantial achievement of the  
283 objectives of the plan.

284 (f) The case manager shall request a meeting of the family and child at a time and place that is  
285 convenient to them with a case staffing team to review the family service plan of any family or  
286 child whenever:

287 (i) the family or child is not in agreement with the services or treatment offered; or  
288 (ii) the family or child does not participate in the services or treatment selected; or  
289 (iii) a school state agency or private service provider does not provide the services or  
290 treatment selected; or  
291 (iv) the case manager needs assistance in developing an appropriate plan for the provision

292 and funding of services; or

293 (v) there is cause to believe that continuation of services is no longer appropriate because  
294 the child has complex medical needs which cannot be met by the program or where the  
295 child's behavior presents a significant risk of harm to the child himself the family or the  
296 community.

297 (g) The parent or legal guardian or child who is over the age of 16 or any other member of the  
298 case staffing team may make a written request that the case manager convenes a resolution  
299 meeting at any time if the member finds that doing so is in the best interest of the family or child.  
300 A resolution meeting requested by a parent or legal guardian or child who is over the age of 16  
301 must be convened within 7 working days from the date that the case manager receives the  
302 request in writing.

303 11. (a) Not more than 110 days after the assessment and screening of a child and family referred  
304 to or requesting community-based services, or 10 days prior to any extension of services granted  
305 under paragraphs c and d of this section, the case manager shall convene a resolution meeting  
306 with the case staffing team to assess whether the goals of the family service plan have been  
307 achieved or if further services are in the best interest of the family and child. After the meeting  
308 the case manager shall document the resolution of the case as follows:

309 (i) that the family and or child will benefit from additional community-based services; or  
310 (ii) that it is unlikely the family and child will benefit from additional community-based  
311 services at this time and the case is discharged; or  
312 (iii) that the family failed to cooperate with the service plan and the case is discharged; or

313 (iv) that the public or private agencies designated in the plan to provide specific  
314 services did not provide those services and the case is discharged; or

315 (v) that the presenting behaviors are resolved and the case is discharged.

316 (b) Within 7 days after meeting, the case manager shall provide the parent or legal guardian with  
317 a written report that details the reasons for the decisions made at the resolution meeting. The  
318 report shall contain a notice in a form acceptable to the juvenile court stating that community-  
319 based services have terminated and whether or not the case manager believes it is likely that the  
320 child and family would benefit from further services.

321 (c) If the family, child and case manager agree to extend services, then the services shall be  
322 extended for an additional 90 days.

323 (d) If the family was referred to community-based services by a court or a probation officer, then  
324 services may be extended for additional 90 day periods at the request of the court or probation  
325 officer.

326 12. (a) The report and any documentation of services provided to the family and child shall not  
327 be public records. Statements made by the family and child while receiving services from the  
328 program shall be treated as confidential. Such statements may not be used in school disciplinary  
329 proceedings and may not be admitted into evidence in any court proceeding arising from the  
330 circumstances which brought the family and child to the program unless the child and family  
331 waive their privilege or unless a court finds that such inadmissibility would result in substantial  
332 harm to the child.

333 (b) Any person offering community-based services to children under this program shall be  
334 required to report suspected physical or emotional abuse or neglect of a child pursuant to General

335 Laws Chapter 119 Section 51A.

336 (c) Not notwithstanding any provision to the contrary, in the absence of specific written directive  
337 from the child and or member of the family who is receiving service, information about the case,  
338 including interactions with service providers and protected health information services, may be  
339 shared among members of the case team as needed to coordinate treatment and provide  
340 appropriate case management.

341 13. There shall be an advisory council appointed by the secretary, which shall advise the  
342 secretary on creation, operation, and effectiveness of the community-based services  
343 program. Members shall include the commissioners or their designees of the departments of  
344 public health, mental health, developmental services, children and families, youth services,  
345 transitional assistance, elementary and secondary education and public safety, the director of the  
346 office of Medicaid or his designee, the commissioner of probation or his designee, the chief  
347 justice of the juvenile court or his designee, a district attorney, members of the bar who represent  
348 children in juvenile court proceedings, a designee of the committee on public counsel services,  
349 an education advocate, representatives of urban, suburban, and rural municipal police  
350 departments and school districts, providers of service to children and families, parents, and at  
351 least 2 young adults who have participated in a community-based services program.

352 14. The secretary shall report annually on February 1 to the joint committee on children, families  
353 and persons with disabilities and the house and senate committees on ways and means and the  
354 child advocate on the progress of the community-based services program.

355 16. The secretary shall report annually on February 1, to the joint committee on children,  
356 families and persons with disabilities, the house and senate committees on ways and means, and  
357 the child advocate on the progress of the community-based services program.

358 SECTION 2: Chapter 69 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding after section 1N the  
359 following new section:

360 Section 1O. Within three years of the effective date of this act, the department shall, subject to  
361 appropriation, establish a discretionary grant program to assist schools in planning and  
362 implementing truancy prevention programs which meet the certification requirements  
363 established pursuant to section 1P of Chapter 69."

364 SECTION 3: Chapter 69 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding after section 1O the  
365 following new section:

366 Section 1P

367 The Department of Education shall promulgate regulations establishing a truancy prevention  
368 program certification process. School districts shall establish a truancy prevention program  
369 which meets the requirements for certification by the department.

**Deleted:** .

370 SECTION 4: Chapter 119 of the General Laws is hereby amended by repealing Sections 39E to  
371 39J, inclusive, and adding the following new sections:

372 Section 39K. Definitions

373 "Child requiring assistance", a child below the age of eighteen who repeatedly runs away from  
374 the home of his parents or legal guardian, or repeatedly fails to obey the lawful and reasonable  
375 commands of his parents or legal guardian, thereby interfering with said parent's or legal  
376 guardian's ability to adequately care for and protect said child, or repeatedly fails to obey the  
377 lawful and reasonable regulations of his school, or who is a habitually truant;

379 ‘Family requiring assistance’, the parents, guardians, siblings and any other relatives or  
380 caretakers responsible for a child between the ages of 6 and 18 who need assistance from state,  
381 local, or private agencies or providers of social, educational, health, mental health, or behavioral  
382 health services in order to adequately care for and protect the child;

383 “Habitual truant”, a child between the ages of 6 and 18 , not otherwise excused from attendance  
384 in accordance with the lawful and reasonable regulations of his school, who fails to attend school  
385 for more than 8 school days in a quarter;

386 “Parent”, includes a legal guardian or other person legally responsible for a child’s care.

387 Section 39L. Jurisdiction

388 The Juvenile court department has original and exclusive jurisdiction over any proceeding  
389 commenced under section 39N alleging that a family or child requires assistance.

390 Section 39M. Nature of the Proceedings

391 1. Proceedings pursuant to sections 39K to 39X, inclusive, shall not be deemed criminal  
392 proceedings and any record of these proceedings, including the filing of a request for assistance  
393 and creation of a docket, shall not be entered in the Criminal Offender Record Information  
394 System.

395 2. Proceedings pursuant to sections 39K to 39X, inclusive, shall be confidential and not be open  
396 to the public.

397 Section 39N. Request for Assistance

398 1. A proceeding to determine whether or not a child or family requires assistance is originated by  
399 the filing of a request for assistance, stating the petitioner's information and belief:

400 (a) that the child repeatedly runs away from the home of his parents or legal guardian or  
401 repeatedly fails to obey the lawful and reasonable commands of his parents thereby  
402 resulting in said parent's inability to adequately care for and protect said child, or that the  
403 child is habitually truant or repeatedly fails to obey the lawful and reasonable regulations  
404 of his school;

405 (b) that the child was under the age of 18 at the time the specified acts took place,

406 (c) specific acts on which the request for assistance is based and the time and place they  
407 are believed to have occurred;

408 (d) when the petitioner is a school district, the request for assistance shall also include:

409 (i) if the request for assistance states that a child is habitually truant, a  
410 statement of the actions taken by the school district to comply with its  
411 obligations under its truancy prevention program certified pursuant to  
412 chapter 69, section 10 and to improve the school attendance of the  
413 child. The request for assistance shall also state whether or not the  
414 child and his family have participated in the truancy prevention  
415 program.; and

416 (ii) if the request for assistance states that a child has repeatedly failed to  
417 obey the lawful and reasonable regulations of the school, a statement of  
418 the specific steps taken by the school to improve the child's conduct.

419 (e) that the child and family require assistance.

420 2. The following persons may originate a proceeding under this section:

421 (a) a police officer;

422 (b) a parent;

423 (c) a school district;

424 3. The petitioner shall attach to the request for assistance the notice of termination of  
425 community-based services as provided for in chapter 6A, section 16H(11)(b) or notice of  
426 ineligibility as provided for in chapter 6A, section 16H(e). Except as provided below, the clerk  
427 shall not accept for filing any request for assistance that does not have attached thereto said  
428 notice of termination or ineligibility. Any person or agency seeking to file a request for  
429 assistance pursuant to this section which does not have attached thereto the notice of termination  
430 of community-based services shall be referred by the clerk of the court to the program designated  
431 by the secretary of the executive office of health and human services to provide community-  
432 based services in the juvenile court district where the child resides. If the petitioner is a police  
433 officer, the clerk may accept a written statement of the reasons for the officer's belief that the  
434 referral to community-based services prior to filing the request for assistance would present a  
435 risk of harm to the child or others in lieu of the notice of termination or ineligibility. The clerk  
436 shall then immediately contact the designated community-based services to provide notice that a  
437 request for assistance has been filed. If the petitioner is a parent, then the clerk may accept a  
438 written statement of the parents' reasons for the parents' belief that referral to community based  
439 services prior to filing the request for assistance would present a risk of significant harm to the

440 child, family or community. The court shall then immediately review the request for assistance  
441 and if the court finds that referral of the family and child to community based services is likely to  
442 result in said harm, then the court shall order the creation of a docket for the matter and assign a  
443 probation officer to conduct an immediate inquiry and report to the court with advice on how to  
444 proceed to obtain assistance for the child.

445 Section 39O Notice

446 1. Except as provided in subsection 2, on the filing of a request for assistance pursuant to this  
447 section, the court may cause a copy of the request for assistance and a summons to be issued,  
448 requiring the child and each parent to appear at the court at a time and place named to address  
449 the request for assistance

450 2. In proceedings originated by a parent the court shall cause a copy of the request for assistance  
451 and notice of the time and place to be heard to be provided to that person when the request is  
452 filed. The court is not required to issue a summons to that person.

453 3. A copy of the request for assistance served or provided under subsection 1 or 2 shall be  
454 accompanied by a notice that, in the event that the court deems it necessary to place the child in  
455 the care and custody of the department of children and families, said parent may be named as a  
456 respondent in any child support proceeding brought in connection with the child's care

457 4. Unless service of the summons required by this section is waived in writing, such summons  
458 shall be served by a constable or police officer, either by delivering it personally to the person to  
459 whom addressed, or by leaving it with a person of proper age to receive the same, at the place of

460 residence or business of such person, and said constable or police officer shall immediately make  
461 return to the court of the time and manner of service.

462 Section 39P Scheduling the Fact Finding Hearing

463 The clerk shall set a date for a fact finding hearing no more than 90 days from the date the  
464 request for assistance is filed. If at any time prior to the hearing the parents, child, petitioner and  
465 probation officer agree, the fact finding hearing may be postponed for an additional 90 days after  
466 the expiration of the initial 90 day period.

467 Section 39Q Appointment of Counsel

468 1. When the request for assistance is filed the child shall be informed that he has a right to  
469 counsel at all hearings, and if said child is not able to retain counsel, the court shall appoint  
470 counsel for said child. The court shall appoint counsel for the child when the request for  
471 assistance is filed. The clerk shall cause a copy of the request for assistance and notice of the  
472 time and place of the fact finding hearing to be delivered to counsel at the time of appointment.

473 2. When the request for assistance is filed, each parent or legal guardian of the child shall be  
474 informed that he has the right to participate as a party in any proceeding under sections 39K to  
475 39X involving his child and that he has the right to counsel at any hearing or proceeding  
476 regarding custody of his child. If said parent or legal guardian is financially unable to retain  
477 counsel, the court shall appoint counsel for said parent or legal guardian.

478 3. The court shall determine whether the parent or legal guardian of a child alleged to require  
479 assistance is indigent. If the court determines that the parent or legal guardian is not indigent, the

480 court shall assess a \$300 fee against the parent or legal guardian to pay for the cost of counsel  
481 appointed for the child. If the parent or legal guardian is determined to be indigent but is still  
482 able to contribute toward the payment of some of said costs, the court shall order the parent or  
483 legal guardian to pay a reasonable amount toward the cost of counsel appointed for the child.

484 Section 39R Preliminary Inquiry by Probation

485 1. The chief probation officer or his designee shall conduct a preliminary inquiry to determine  
486 whether in his opinion the best interests of the child and family require that crisis intervention  
487 services be provided to the child and family.

488 The probation officer in his discretion may:

489 (a) refer the family and child to the program designated to provide community-based  
490 services for this juvenile court division; the probation officer may confer with the  
491 provider of community-based services to resolve the situation which formed the basis of  
492 the request for assistance;

493 (b) refer the child to an appropriate public or private organization or person for  
494 psychiatric, psychological, educational, occupational, medical, dental or social services;

495 (c) conduct conferences with the child, the child's family and the petitioner for the  
496 purpose of effecting adjustments or agreements which are calculated to resolve the  
497 situation which formed the basis of the request for assistance;

498 (d) if the child or his parents fail to participate in good faith with the referrals or  
499 conferences arranged by the probation officer or if the probation officer is not able to

500 refer the child or his parents to an appropriate public or private organization which is  
501 willing and able to provide appropriate services, the probation officer shall so certify in  
502 writing and present these findings to the court.

503 2. (a) The probation officer shall gather information concerning the child and family which in  
504 both substance and format is compatible with and complementary to the information gathered by  
505 programs providing community-based services pursuant to section 16H of chapter 6A.

506 (b) The Commissioner of Probation shall establish a data collection system for use by probation  
507 officers assisting children pursuant to sections 39K through 39X which maintains the privacy of  
508 clients served, assists the court in addressing the needs of the population to be served, collects  
509 information related to, among other things the insurance status and coverage of clients served,  
510 and other information that may assist the commissioner and the court in evaluating the  
511 availability and effectiveness of services for children who are the subjects of requests for  
512 assistance pursuant to this section.

513 (c) The Commissioner of Probation shall report annually to the Child Advocate on the assistance  
514 provided by probation officers to children and families under Sections 39K to 39X. The report  
515 shall be filed on October 1 of each year and shall include for each juvenile court district: the  
516 number of children and families receiving assistance, an analysis of the services provided and an  
517 identification of gaps in services available, the status or resolution of each request for assistance  
518 filed in the previous year, and the numbers of children who are the subject of a request for  
519 assistance and also charged with a delinquency matter in the previous year,

520 3. Conferences and referrals arranged under this section may extend for a period not to exceed 90  
521 days from the date that the request for assistance was filed, unless the parent, child and petitioner  
522 voluntarily agree in writing to a continuation of such conferences or referrals for an additional  
523 period not to exceed 90 days from the expiration of the original period. Upon the expiration of  
524 the initial 90 day period, or of such additional 90 day period, the request for assistance may be  
525 dismissed and the child and his parents discharged from any further obligation to participate in  
526 such conferences and referrals, or a fact finding hearing shall be held.

527 Section 39S Custody, Failure to Appear

528 If, after a hearing at which the child is represented by counsel, the court finds that a child alleged  
529 to require assistance by reason of repeatedly failing to obey the lawful and reasonable commands  
530 of his parent is likely not to appear at the fact finding hearing or at the disposition hearing, the  
531 court may place the child in the temporary custody of the Department of Children and Families.

532 An order under this Section shall be valid for no more than 15 days without the child being  
533 brought again before the court for a hearing on whether the order should be continued for another  
534 15 day period. If the court decides to extend the order, it shall note in writing the detailed  
535 reasons for its decision. An order under this section may be in effect for no more than 45 days  
536 total.

537 A child who is the subject of a request for assistance may not be confined in shackles or similar  
538 restraints or in a court lockup facility in connection with any proceedings pursuant to Sections  
539 39K through 39X.

540 Section 39T Withdrawal of Request for Assistance

541 The petitioners may, upon a showing that the circumstances which brought the matter before the  
542 court have been resolved, withdraw the request for assistance at any point prior to a hearing to  
543 determine the disposition of a request for assistance.

544 Section 39U Fact Finding Hearing

545 1. The court shall hold a fact finding hearing in which it shall receive evidence from the  
546 petitioner, the parent, and the community-based services program case manager and the  
547 recommendation of the probation officer.

548 2. At the fact finding hearing the court shall review any notice of termination of community-  
549 based services. The court shall consider any available documentation of diligent attempts to  
550 provide appropriate services and determine whether such efforts or services provided were  
551 sufficient. With the consent of the parent(s) and child the court may consider any written reports  
552 from service providers which would otherwise be subject to confidentiality or privilege.

553 The court may order the child and the parent or other person legally responsible for the child to  
554 participate in community-based services regardless of whether or not the child and parents have  
555 previously used community based services on a voluntary basis. If the designated program  
556 thereafter determines that the case has been successfully resolved, it shall so notify the court, and  
557 the court shall dismiss the request for assistance.

558 3. The court shall either:

559 (i) dismiss the request for assistance because the circumstances which led to the filing of  
560 a request for assistance have been resolved and the court finds that the child and family  
561 do not require assistance;

562 (ii) adjourn the hearing for up to 60 days because it finds that the interests of the child  
563 would best be served by continued informal assistance, in which case the court shall, with  
564 the consent of the child and his parent, refer the child to a probation officer or refer the  
565 child and family to the designated program for additional community-based services  
566 assistance; or

567 (iii) find that the child and family require assistance and schedule a hearing for  
568 disposition

569 4. No statements made by a child, family member, or by any other person during the period of  
570 inquiries, conferences, or referrals may be admitted at the fact finding hearing without the  
571 consent of the child or family member who made the statement, but may be received by the court  
572 at the hearing for disposition

573 Section 39V Disposition Hearing

574 1. At any hearing held to determine whether a child and family require assistance, the child and  
575 his attorney shall be present and the parents or legal guardian shall be given an opportunity to be  
576 heard. The petitioner who files the request for assistance shall bear the burden of presenting  
577 evidence proving that the child and family require assistance. If the court finds the allegations in  
578 the request for assistance have been proved at the fact finding hearing by a preponderance of the

579 evidence, it may find that the child and family named in such request for assistance to be a child  
580 and family requiring assistance.

581 2. Upon making a finding that a child and family require assistance, the court shall convene a  
582 meeting of the probation officer who conducted the preliminary inquiry, the case manager, if  
583 any, from the community-based services program, the petitioner, a representative from the  
584 child's school, the child's parent, a representative of the department of children and families, and  
585 any other person the court deems helpful in determining the assistance to be offered to the child  
586 and family. The persons at the meeting shall present written findings to the court to advise the  
587 court on appropriate treatment and services for the child and family and appropriate placement  
588 for the child and appropriate conditions and limitations of such placement. The court, taking into  
589 consideration those findings and the physical and emotional welfare of the child, may make any  
590 of the following orders of disposition:

591 (a) subject to any conditions and limitations the court may prescribe, including provision  
592 for medical, psychological, psychiatric, educational, occupational and social services, and  
593 for supervision by a court clinic or by any public or private organization providing  
594 counseling or guidance services, permit the child to remain with his parents;

595 (b) subject to such conditions and limitations as the court may prescribe, including, but  
596 not limited to provisions for those services described in clause (a), place the child in the  
597 care of any of the following:

598 (i) a relative, or other adult individual who, after inquiry by the probation officer  
599 or other person or agency designated by the court, is found to be qualified to  
600 receive and care for the child;

601 (ii) a private charitable or childcare agency or other private organization, licensed  
602 or otherwise authorized by law to receive and provide care for such children; or

603 (iii) a private organization which, after inquiry by the probation officer or other  
604 person or agency designated by the court, is found to be qualified to receive and  
605 care for the child.

606 (c) subject to the provisions of sections 32 and 33 and with such conditions and  
607 limitations as the court may recommend, place the child in the custody of the department  
608 of children and families. If the court chooses to place the child in the custody of the  
609 department then at the same time, the court shall consider the provisions of section 29C  
610 and shall make the written certification and determinations required by said section 29C.  
611 When the court has placed a child in the custody of the department, then the department:

- 612 (i) may not refuse out-of-home placement of a child if the  
613 placement is recommended by the court provided that the court  
614 has made the written certification and determinations required  
615 by said section 29C;
- 616 (ii) may not refuse out of home placement when requested by the  
617 child if there is a substantiated history of abuse and neglect in  
618 the home by the parent or legal guardian;

- (iii) subject to clauses (i) and (ii), shall direct the type and length of such out-of-home placement;
- (iv) subject to clauses (i) and (ii), shall give due consideration to the recommendations of the court. Whenever the department decides not to carry out the recommendations of the court regarding placement and treatment of the child it shall present the reasons for its decision and the alternative plan for treatment and placement in writing to the court.

(d) The court may issue an order directing any state agency to provide particular services to the family and child including but not limited to those services described in clause (a). If the agency is not able to comply with the order directing services then the agency shall provide to the court a written statement of the reasons why it is unable to provide those services. A copy of the statement shall be sent to the house and senate committees on ways and means and the joint committee on children, families and persons with disabilities.

(e) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection 2 (d) the court may not order the child to be placed in the custody of the department of youth services and may not be placed in a locked facility.

637 3. A child found to require assistance shall not be placed in a locked facility or any facility  
638 designated or operated for juveniles adjudicated delinquent. However, such child may be placed  
639 in a facility which operates as a group home to provide therapeutic care for juveniles regardless  
640 of whether juveniles adjudicated delinquent are also provided care in such facility.

641 Section 39W Duration of Assistance

642 1. Any order of disposition under Section 39V shall continue in force for not more than 90 days;  
643 provided, however, that the court which entered the order may, after a hearing, extend its  
644 duration for up to three additional periods, each such period not to exceed 90 days, if the court  
645 finds that the purposes of the order have not been accomplished and that such extension would  
646 be reasonably likely to further those purposes. Orders shall be extended upon a finding that the  
647 child or family are not participating in good faith.

648 2. No order shall continue in effect after the eighteenth birthday of a child named in a request for  
649 assistance.

650 Section 39X. Custodial Protection

651 1. (a) A child may be taken into custodial protection for engaging in the behaviors described in  
652 section 39N, only if such child has failed to obey a summons issued pursuant to section 390, or if  
653 the law enforcement officer initiating limited custody has probable cause to believe that such  
654 child has run away from the home of his parents or legal guardian.

655 (b) After an officer has taken a child into custodial protection, the officer shall immediately  
656 notify the parent or other person legally responsible for the child's care, or the person with whom  
657 he is domiciled, that he is under the custodial protection of the officer.

658 (c) After making every reasonable effort to give notice under paragraph (b), the officer shall:  
659 (i) release the child to the custody of his or her parent or other person legally responsible  
660 for his or her care upon the written promise, without surety, of the person to whose

661 custody the child is released that he will bring the child to the program designated to  
662 provide community-based services for the geographic region which constitutes the  
663 district of the juvenile court department within which the child was taken into custodial  
664 protection or in which the child resides, at a time and place specified in writing; or

665 (ii) forthwith and with all reasonable speed take the child directly, and without first being  
666 taken to the police station house, to the program designated to provide community-based  
667 services for the geographic region which constitutes the district of the juvenile court  
668 department within which the child was taken into custodial protection or in which the  
669 child resides,; or

670 (iii) release the child to a representative of the department of children and families, if the  
671 law enforcement officer has reason to believe that the child is or has been in the care or  
672 custody of such department; or

673 (iv) take the child directly to the juvenile court in which the act occasioning the taking  
674 into custodial protection occurred, provided that the officer affirms on the record that he  
675 or she attempted to exercise the options identified in paragraphs (i), (ii), and (iii) of this  
676 subdivision, was unable to exercise these options, and the reasons therefore.

677 (d) In the absence of special circumstances, the officer shall release the child to his parents or  
678 other person legally responsible for his care in accord with paragraph (c)(i).

679 (e) A child may not be securely detained in a police station or town lockup. At no time shall a  
680 child be placed in any locked facility under the supervision of any police department, sheriff  
681 department, or department of youth services.

682 (f) Notwithstanding the foregoing requirements for placement, any such child who has been  
683 taken into custodial protection shall, if necessary, be taken to a medical facility for treatment or  
684 observation.

685 SECTION 5

686 Notwithstanding any general law to the contrary the secretary of the executive office of health  
687 and human services and the commissioners of departments of public health, mental health,  
688 developmental services, children and families, youth services and transitional assistance shall  
689 enter into memoranda of understanding among themselves and with the department of education,  
690 office of the commissioner of probation, the juvenile court, municipal police departments and  
691 school districts to provide coordination, delivery, and funding of services to children and  
692 families who, pursuant to the provisions of section 16H(7)(b) of chapter 6A of the General Laws,  
693 are not eligible for community-based services established pursuant to section 16H of chapter 6A.

694 SECTION 6

695 The secretary of the executive office of health and human services shall pilot a program to  
696 address the unique needs of girls who run away from their parents and legal guardians.

697 SECTION 7

698 The department of education shall pilot a truancy prevention program using a restorative justice  
699 format in at least one urban high school in the Commonwealth. The department shall evaluate  
700 the effectiveness of the program in preventing truancy and enhancing the child's academic  
701 performance and report the results of that evaluation to the board of education.

702 SECTION 8.

703 Chapter 741 of the Acts of 1965 is hereby amended by striking out, in line 3 of the first paragraph,  
704 the word “sixteen” and inserting in place thereof the following word:- eighteen.

705 SECTION 9.

706 Chapter 741 of the Acts of 1965 is hereby amended by striking out, in line 4 of the second  
707 paragraph, the word “sixteen” and inserting in place thereof the following word:- eighteen